



BOARD OF ETHICS

Annual Report

January 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012

King County Code of Ethics
Helping Employees Make Ethical Decisions

King County Board of Ethics

ANNUAL REPORT

JANUARY 1, 2011 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2012

MEMBERS

Roland H. Carlson
Gunbjorg Ladstein
Bruce C. Laing, Chair
Louise Miller
Anne J. Watanabe

ADMINISTRATOR

Kelli Williams

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Shelby Miklethun

KING COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Dow Constantine

DEPARTMENT OF EXECUTIVE SERVICES

Caroline Whalen, County Administrative Officer and Director
Tom Koney, Deputy Director



King County

King County Board of Ethics

Department of Executive Services

The Chinook Building
401 Fifth Avenue, Suite 135
Seattle, WA 98104-1818 CNK-ES-0135
206-296-1586 Fax 206-205-0840
TTY Relay: 711

board.ethics@kingcounty.gov
www.kingcounty.gov/ethics

Alternative Formats Available



King County

King County Board of Ethics

Department of Executive Services

July 2012

King County Executive Dow Constantine
Metropolitan King County Council Chair Larry Gossett
Members of the Metropolitan King County Council
Separately Elected Officials

The Board of Ethics and the Ethics Program are proud to present this report of our activities and accomplishments during the past 18 months. The report is organized around provisions of the King County Strategic Plan and the Board's mission and goals.

Underlying the Code of Ethics is the proposition that public trust in King County government depends upon decision-making processes that are transparent and meet the highest ethical standards. Our approach to implementing the Code of Ethics is to emphasize the prevention of code violations. The employee education programs of the Ethics Program and the requirements for annual employee and consultant financial disclosure statements are essential elements in the prevention strategy.

King County elected officials and managers are crucial to the prevention of Code of Ethics violations. When county employees perceive that their leaders enthusiastically support the Code of Ethics and ethics programs, they give more serious consideration to the ethics issues they encounter in their daily activities. We appreciate the time and attention the County Council and the County Executive allocate to annual meetings with the Board, and the participation of county leadership in the celebration of the ethics program at the Board's annual reception.

Sincerely,

Bruce C. Laing, Chair



The King County Board of Ethics

AUTHORITY

The King County Board of Ethics is authorized by King County Code (K.C.C.) 3.04, Employee Code of Ethics.

BOARD COMPOSITION

Created by ordinance in 1972, the Board of Ethics is a five-member citizen advisory, administrative, quasi-judicial board. Authorized by K.C.C. 3.04, the Board may interpret the code through advisory opinions and implement forms, processes, and procedures to ensure compliance with the Code of Ethics. In addition to those responsibilities, the Board oversees the administration of financial and consultant disclosure requirements and increases awareness of ethics issues through an extensive education and training program. The Board also hears appeals on findings of violations of the Code of Ethics by the Office of Citizen Complaints—Ombudsman.

Two members of the board are to be appointed by the County Executive and two members are to be appointed by the County Executive based on nominations made by the King County Council. The fifth member, who serves as chair, is appointed by the County Executive based upon nominations from the other board members.

MEMBERS AND STAFF



Roland (Ron) Carlson

1994 - 2012

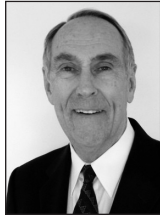
Mr. Carlson retired as an executive of the Boeing Company in 1994 after 34 years of service. His assignments included Defense and Space Division New Business Management and Product Line Planning. Mr. Carlson is also a retired Air Force Reserve officer. He has served his community in a variety of ways including representing the 47th District in the Washington State House of Representatives and serving as a member of the Imperials Board of Directors, King County Library Board of Directors and chairing the Boy Scouts of America Eagle Scout Committee.



Gunbjorg Ladstein

2008 - present

Ms. Ladstein's professional experience includes working as a transportation planner for King County, retiring in 2006. Her work experience also includes working as a program consultant for United Way of King County and systems engineer for IBM. Ms. Ladstein is also a long-time member of the League of Women Voters of Seattle and has served on the Board of Directors and as president. She has been involved in many local citizens committees and has served on the Washington State Boundary Review Board of King County, including a term as chairperson.



Bruce C. Laing (Chair)

2008 - 2012

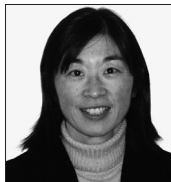
Mr. Laing has been a professional urban planner for more than 40 years and is a member of the College of Fellows, American Institute of Certified Planners. Mr. Laing was elected to the King County Council in 1979 and served as a councilmember through 1995. During his tenure on the King County Council, he also served on the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority Board (now Sound Transit), on the Executive Board of the Puget Sound Regional Council, and on the Council of the Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle (METRO).



Louise Miller

2010 - present

Ms. Miller is a former music teacher who taught in Seattle schools and had a private music studio for many years. Ms. Miller started her political career in 1978 when she was elected as a Woodinville Water/Sewer Commissioner. She then served 11 years in the State House of Representatives and eight years on the King County Council. She continues to be active in her community, serving as a board member of the Seattle Center Foundation, a vice president of the Seattle Opera Board of Trustees and a co-chair of the Mainstream Republicans. Most recently, Ms. Miller chaired the School Siting Task Force.



Anne J. Watanabe

2007 - present

Ms. Watanabe is the Deputy Hearing Examiner for the City of Seattle, and has served in that capacity since 1995. Ms. Watanabe has also worked in a variety of roles in land use and planning for the cities of Kent and Bellevue and for the Washington State Department of Ecology. Ms. Watanabe has also worked in private practice as an attorney. Ms. Watanabe is very active in the local community and has previously served on the Board of the Municipal League of King County and as a volunteer with Refugee Women's Alliance and the King County Bar Association Neighborhood Clinics.

Kelli Williams

Ms. Williams joined the Ethics Program in May 2011. She has been a King County employee since 1997 and has previously worked for the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office and the Department of Judicial Administration. Ms. Williams is the administrator of the Public Records Program for King County's executive branch and serves on the board of the Washington Association of Public Records Officers.

Shelby Miklethun

Ms. Miklethun joined the Ethics Program in November 2011. She has been a King County employee since 2007 and has previously worked for the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office and the Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention. Prior to joining King County, Ms. Miklethun worked for two private law firms as a legal assistant.



The Board of Ethics and the King County Strategic Plan

On July 26, 2010, the County Council unanimously approved legislation adopting the “King County Strategic Plan, 2010–2014: Working Together for One King County.” The plan was created with input from thousands of residents and county employees over a period of 18 months and was developed in collaboration with the County Council and the County’s separately elected officials. It is a key tool in the County Executive’s work to reform county government by focusing on customer service, partnerships, and ways to bring down the cost of government. The Board of Ethics strives to develop strategies that align its work with the King County Strategic Plan.

King County Strategic Plan Goal: Service Excellence – Establish a culture of customer service and deliver services that are responsive to community needs.

The Board of Ethics has implemented two important changes to its annual financial disclosure program. First, it implemented a system of direct reporting with King County board and commission liaisons. Using data from the King County Executive’s Office, this process enables liaisons to annually confirm board and commission membership directly with the Board of Ethics instead of building new rosters each year. Secondly, this year, the Board of Ethics accepted email and facsimile submittals of employee and board member financial disclosure forms, which was a change responsive to repeated requests from employees and board and commission members. This change reduced interoffice mail volume and postage costs. Both of these process changes also eliminated unnecessary steps in the financial disclosure process, making the process leaner. In the future, the Board of Ethics plans to make continuous improvement through the use of technologies such as SharePoint and electronic signatures.

King County Strategic Plan Goal: Financial Stewardship – Exercise sound financial management and build King County’s long-term fiscal strength.

The Board of Ethics implemented a new service delivery model in 2011. In the past, the Board of Ethics was served by a full-time executive director and part-time administrative staff during the financial disclosure season. The new service delivery model staffs the Board of Ethics with an administrator and an administrative assistant. These two employees split their time between staffing the Board of Ethics and managing the Public Records Program for the County’s executive branch. This change allows the Department of Executive Services (DES) to provide a higher level of service year round, at a reduced cost overall. Additionally,

AMOUNT SPENT ON BOARD OF ETHICS AND ETHICS PROGRAM

01/01/2011 – 12/31/2011	\$115,323
01/01/2012 – 5/31/2012	\$39,061

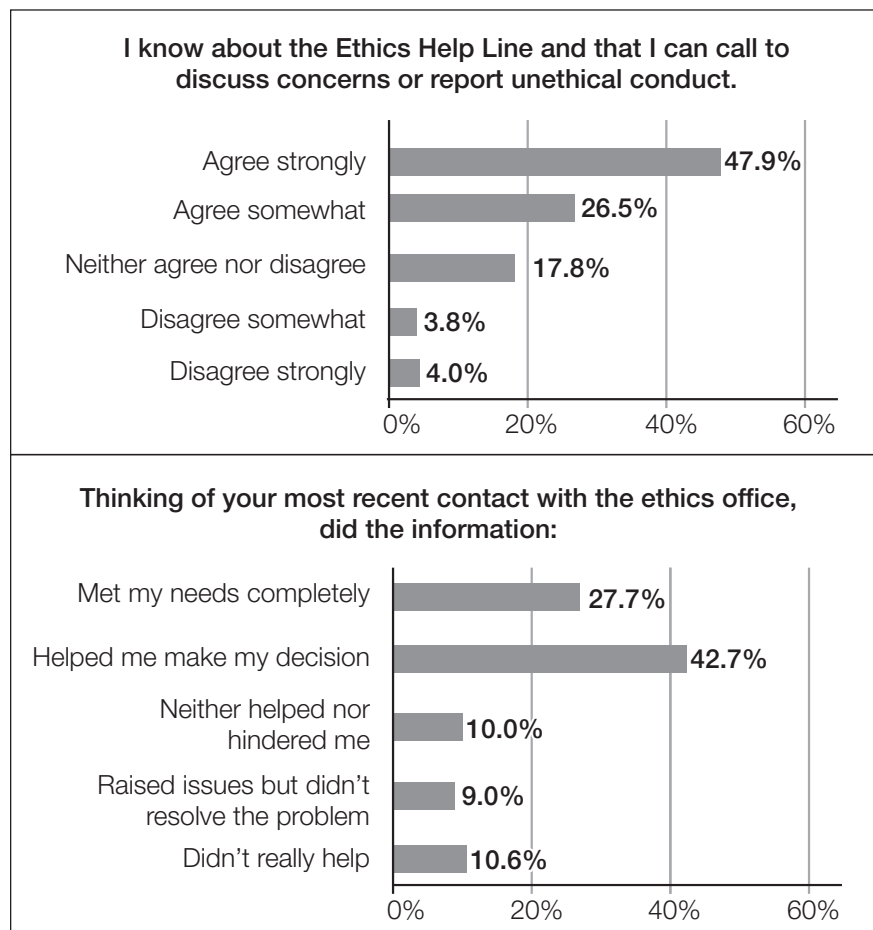


the Board of Ethics participated in the County's 2011 space consolidations. The Ethics Program moved from its own separate office and became part of the DES Director's Office along with the Office of Alternative Dispute Resolution. This change realizes financial efficiencies for DES administration and reduces the Ethics Program's carbon footprint. For 2012 and beyond, the consolidation is expected to save the King County General Fund approximately \$40,000 annually in reduced space charges and office expenses.

King County Strategic Plan Goal: Quality Workforce – Develop and empower King County government's most valuable asset, our employees.

The Board of Ethics presents ethics information to all new county employees at the weekly New Employee Orientation (NEO). At this presentation, Ethics Program staff members train new employees on the Code of Ethics and provide them with resources for ethics inquiries and issues. Over the past 18 months, staff provided training to 1,419 new employees at 78 NEO sessions. At NEO, new employees receive a Summary of the Code of Ethics, an Ethics Help Line card and a brochure on ethics-related interactions with vendors, contractors and customers. Employees are encouraged to contact the Ethics Program as a resource to help empower them to make ethical decisions in the workplace.

ETHICS HELP LINE





Mission and Goals

MISSION

To ensure the highest standards of public service by developing, disseminating and promoting readily understandable ethics requirements for county employees and agencies.

GOALS

Goal I: To educate county employees, county managers, and board and commission members of their obligations to the public under the Code of Ethics, and how ethics is a positive tool which supports both good management practices and good public service on behalf of the citizens of King County.

In addition to training new county employees at NEO, Ethics Program staff members also provide training to King County boards and commissions. This year, Ethics Program staff members developed a new training curriculum for King County boards and commissions. The training, which focuses on situations unique to volunteer board and commission members, has received positive feedback.

In December 2011, the Ethics Program administered the Annual Ethics Quiz/Survey. This survey was offered to all county employees and was open from December 9 through December 17. In total, 1,711 employees completed the survey, representing a total response rate of 12.8%. Of these respondents, 25.2% supervise other employees. The purpose of the survey is to remind county employees of the importance of the Code of Ethics and to challenge them to apply ethical concepts to scenarios they may encounter in their work.

ETHICS QUIZ SCENARIO CORRECT RESPONSE RATES

Question Number	Percentage of Correct Responses	Ethics Concept(s)
1	85.0%	Acceptance of meals
2	95.6%	Use of county vehicles
3	92.1%	Duty to notify supervisor
4	99.0%	Just and equitable treatment, Campaign activities
5	98.7%	Power of office, Use of county resources, Duty to notify
6	95.3%	Solicitation of businesses
7	76.5%	Conflict of interest, Duty to notify supervisor
8	99.5%	Gifts and meals, Conflict of interest
9	98.9%	Ethics policies



WHAT WE LEARNED FROM QUIZ/SURVEY RESPONSES:

Employees understand the Code of Ethics and how it applies to their work

Employees know how to access resources available to them when seeking guidance regarding ethics

Employees who contact the Ethics Program get their needs met and are satisfied with the service provided

ETHIC QUIZ/SURVEY DATA RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Department, Office or Agency	Percentage of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention	6.6%	113
Department of Assessments	2.7%	46
Department of Community and Human Services	5.0%	86
Department of Development and Environmental Services	1.9%	33
Department of Executive Services	8.5%	146
Department of Judicial Administration	2.3%	39
Department of Natural Resources and Parks	17.9%	306
Department of Transportation	16.7%	286
King County Information Technology	3.0%	52
King County Council	1.2%	21
King County District Court	2.0%	35
King County Elections	0.8%	14
King County Executive Office	1.2%	21
King County Sheriff's Office	7.7%	132
King County Superior Court	3.3%	56
Office of Economic and Financial Analysis	0.1%	1
Office of Labor Relations	0.1%	2
Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget	0.6%	10
Prosecuting Attorney's Office	3.9%	67
Public Health Seattle & King County	14.3%	245



Goal II: To continue a systematic review of the Code of Ethics and to make appropriate recommendations for consideration by the County Executive and County Council.

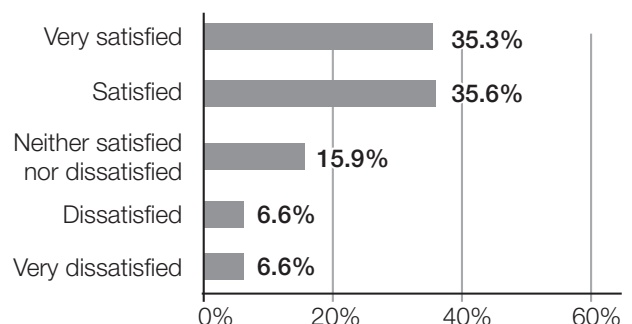
Starting in 2011, the Board of Ethics began a collaborative effort with the King County Ombudsman's Office to undertake a review of the Code of Ethics. This ongoing effort has strengthened the important relationship between the Board and the Ombudsman's Office, and the Board looks forward to the work that lies ahead in this project.

Goal III: To provide timely advice and guidance to county employees and county elected officials on compliance with the King County Code of Ethics.

When requested by a county officer or employee, or whenever it deems it to be in the public interest, the Board of Ethics renders written advisory opinions concerning questions of ethics, conflicts of interest and the applicability of the Code of Ethics. On February 29, 2012, the Board of Ethics issued Advisory Opinion No. 1164, wherein it considered whether a King County Councilmember's acceptance of compensation for work done as a Valley Medical Center (VMC) board member violates the King County Code of Ethics and whether recusal from all decision-making in instances of apparent conflict is adequate to comply with the King County Code of Ethics.

The Board opined that a Councilmember could accept compensation for work done as a VMC board member, as VMC is a governmental unit per K.C.C. 3.04.107(K). Thus, compensation received from VMC for services rendered is not prohibited. As to the issue of apparent conflict and recusal, the Board opined that the appropriate steps for avoiding violation of the Code of Ethics will need to be assessed by the Councilmember on a case by case basis as these potential conflicts arise. It further stated that, it would be conceivable that the Councilmember may encounter situations wherein her service as a VMC board member could impair her independence of judgment or be incompatible with the performance of her official duties as a King County Councilmember. It opined that in instances wherein this Councilmember identifies a potential conflict of interest, the specific facts of that situation should be applied to the Code of Ethics to determine the necessary course of action. Lastly,

If you have contacted the ethics office for information on an ethics matter, how would you describe the overall quality of your experience, including timeliness and courtesy? Were you:





the Board stated that where an actual conflict is unavoidable, the conflict must be disclosed on the record and the Councilmember must abstain from participation in discussions or voting on the issue.

The Ethics Program staff members also answer the Ethics Hotline, maintain the Board of Ethics website and respond to email inquiries sent to the Board of Ethics email inbox. These responses help resolve ethics-related questions by providing employees and supervisors with the information they need to make common sense decisions. In addition to reviewing the situation and providing clarifying information, the ethics staff members encourage employees to talk the matter over with their supervisors to resolve the issue within the context of departmental policy. Ethics Program staff members provide guidance on a variety of ethics issues such as use of county resources for personal convenience or profit, acceptance of gifts/meals/things of value from those doing business or seeking to do business with the county, conflict with an employee's official job responsibilities, post-employment provisions, outside or secondary employment for county employees and nepotism.

Goal IV: To conduct an annual review of financial disclosure statements for county officials and county employees to identify potential conflict of interest with their official duties; to conduct timely review of consultant disclosure statements to identify potential conflicts of interest for consultants with their duties related to county contracts.

EMPLOYEES AND COUNTY BOARD AND COMMISSION MEMBERS

In 2012, as of the April 15 deadline, 100% of the 2,981 affected officials and employees and 97.6% of the 496 county board and commission members had filed statements of financial and other interests as required under K.C.C. 3.04.050. Comparatively, in 2011, as of the April 15 deadline, 100% of the 2,971 affected officials and employees and 98% of the 504 county board and commission members had filed statements. To administer this program, staff members must review each statement individually and, if necessary, request additional or clarifying information before accepting the statement. Ethics Program staff members worked closely with department coordinators and board and commission liaisons to achieve compliance with this program. Additionally, Ethics Program staff members, department coordinators and board and commission liaisons work together throughout the year to ensure that new employees and board and commission members file financial disclosure statements within the timelines required in K.C.C. 3.04.050.

CONSULTANT DISCLOSURE

Under K.C.C. 3.04.120, each consultant entering into a contract to provide professional, technical or engineering services to the County in an amount exceeding \$5,000 must file a sworn statement disclosing information related to potential conflicts of interest. The Ethics Program received and reviewed approximately 102 consultant disclosure forms in 2011 and 75 forms as of June 30, 2012. Like employee and board and commission member disclosure forms, Ethics



Program staff members must review each statement individually and, if necessary, request additional or clarifying information before accepting the statement. No payment may be made on any affected contract until five days after receipt by the ethics office of the completed form.

DISCLOSURE PROGRAM STATISTICS					
Year	Number of Board and Commission Members*	Percentage of Compliance on 4/15	Number of Employees and Elected Officials*	Percentage of Compliance on 4/15	Number of Consultant Disclosure Statements**
2003	448	99.0%	2,119	99.0%	299
2004	461	97.0%	2,302	99.0%	301
2005	432	96.8%	2,411	99.7%	300
2006	432	98.4%	2,432	99.8%	252
2007	445	98.2%	2,461	99.4%	253
2008	502	99.2%	2,766	99.7%	185
2009	512	98.4%	2,955	99.8%	235
2010	504	98.0%	2,971	100.0%	102
2011	496	97.6%	2,981	100.0%	75***

* Filers are reporting on the prior calendar year
 ** Filers are reporting on the past 24 months
 *** 1/1/12 – 6/30/12

Goal V: To collaborate with other ethics agencies both public and private within Washington and the U.S. and Canada for the purposes of information exchange and to consider program improvements for the King County Ethics Program.

This year, the Board of Ethics has focused on strengthening our relationship with the King County Ombudsman's Office. Pursuant to the Code of Ethics, the Ombudsman's Office is responsible for investigating complaints that allege violations of the Code of Ethics. As both offices work with county employees, board and commission members and the public regarding ethics issues, it is vital that we communicate well and work closely together.



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